
**Technology, Energy &
Communications Committee**

HB 3116

Brief Description: Streamlining technology efforts.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, Nixon, Anderson, Kessler and Dunn.

Brief Summary of Bill

- The Legislature intends to centralize technology missions and reduce administrative overhead at the Spokane Intercollegiate Research and Technology Institute, the Washington Technology Center, the Washington State University Energy Program, and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development Energy Policy Office.

Hearing Date: 1/31/06

Staff: Scott Richards (786-7156).

Background:

Spokane Intercollegiate Research and Technology Institute (SIRTI)

In 1989, the Legislature created the Spokane Intercollegiate Research and Technology Institute (SIRTI), which was designed as a cooperative venture of Eastern Washington University (EWU), Gonzaga University, Whitworth College, the community colleges of Spokane, and Washington State University (WSU). Through SIRTI, the member institutions collaborate in the offering of education and training, applied and developmental research, and business resource and support that is specifically aimed at the economic development of the Spokane area.

Research staff support for SIRTI is provided from among the cooperating institutions through cooperative agreements. Non-state support for research activities is emphasized, including the receipt of federal funds and private gifts or grants. Operational staff are employees of SIRTI. The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) must approve the establishment of education programs and any facility acquisition.

The Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (DCTED) is made responsible for contracting with SIRTI for the expenditure of state-appropriated funds for the operation of the institute. The stated mission of SIRTI is "to accelerate the development and growth of technology companies in the inland Northwest, particularly in Eastern Washington."

Washington Technology Center

The Washington Technology Center (WTC) was established in 1983 to help companies develop and commercialize technology products and services in Washington State. The WTC facilitates collaboration between the state's research universities and the technology industry. Its stated mission is to "perform and commercialize research on a statewide basis that benefits the intermediate and long-term economic vitality of the state of Washington, and to develop and strength university-industry relationships through the conduct of research that is primarily of interest to Washington-based companies or state economic development programs."

The WTC is administered by a board of directors appointed by the Governor that includes 14 industry members, eight university members and four ex officio members. Included in its duties are establishing priorities for the selection and funding of research projects, as well as approving and allocating funding for research projects conducted by the WTC.

Washington State University Energy Program:

The Washington State University Energy Program is a self-supported department within the university's extension service. It receives project funding from federal government agencies, federal power marketing agencies, the nonprofit Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance, and several other sources.

The WSU Energy Program has a budget of about \$6 million and a staff of 60 working at its downtown Olympia office, in Spokane and at other satellite locations. Its customers range from industrial plants to private consulting firms, businesses, government agencies, and utilities. The WSU Energy Program currently has projects in the following areas: building science, climate change, distributed generation, engineering, renewables, resource efficiency management, and technical assistance.

Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development's Energy Policy Office

The Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development's (DCTED) Energy Policy Division is charged with supervising and administrating energy-related activities in the state, as well as advising the Governor and the Legislature with respect to energy matters affecting the state.

DCTED's Energy Policy office is responsible for promoting the following state energy policies:

- the development and use of a diverse array of energy resources with emphasis on renewable energy resources;
- a sufficient supply of energy to insure the health and economic welfare of its citizens;
- the development and use of energy resources that are consistent with the statutory environmental policies of the state;
- energy conservation and elimination of wasteful and uneconomic uses of energy and materials including, but not limited to, resource recovery and materials recycling;
- allocating energy resources in energy emergency shortage situations in order to maintain the public health, safety and welfare of its citizens, as well as assisting citizens and industry in adjusting to the limited availability of energy in order to minimize adverse impact on their physical, social, and economic well-being;
- providing a source of impartial and objective information in order to ensure that the state's energy policy may be enhanced; and
- providing primary guidance for implementation of the state's energy policy.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature intends to provide more focus and efficient effort of resources by centralizing technology missions and by reducing administrative overhead at the following institutions: SIRTI, Washington Technology Center (WTC), WSU Energy Program, and DCTED Energy Policy Division.

New sections are added to chapter 28B.38 RCW (SIRTI), 28B.20 (WTC), 28B.30 (WSU Energy Program), and 43.21F (DCTED Energy Policy Division).

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.